(iv) As on 31.3.2002, 20.17 Lac Conductor KM (LCKM) of paper core copper cable has been replaced by Optical Fibre Cable. The remaining 28.17 LCKM of cable are planned to be replaced progressively by the end of 2005-2006.

(v) Outdoor plant is being rehabilitated continuously.

Foodgrains and sugar for BPL People in U.P.

*676. SHRI LALIT SURI : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) the quantum of foodgrains and sugar released for distribution through the PDS for the Below Poverty Line families in Uttar Pradesh during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the number of such families Below Poverty Line in Uttar Pradesh at present and the steps taken by Government to ensure that no families Below Poverty Line are left out of this scheme; and

(c) the rates at which foodgrains and sugar are made available under this scheme at present ?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV) : (a) The quantum of foodgrains and sugar allocated to Uttar Pradesh for the BPL families (including the Antyodaya families) under the PDS for the last 3 years are as under :—

(figures in MTs)

Year	Rice	Wheat	Sugar
2000-2001	733828	1537660	776528
2001-2002	818760	1781820	411280
2002-2003	1471272	2902618	411280

(b) The estimated no. of BPL families (as on 1.3.2000) in Uttar Pradesh was 106.79 lakhs (including 16.37 lakh Antyodaya families). The identification and issue of distinctive Ration Cards to these families has been completed by the State Government. Under the Guidelines for implementation of TPDS, the State Governments have been asked to include the really poor and vulnerable sections of society under the BPL category and to actively involve the Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabhas/local representative bodies in the identification process. The State Governments have also been asked to conduct periodical checking of Ration Cards to weed out ineligible Ration Cards.

(c) The Issue Price of Rice, Wheat and Sugar under the BPL category, by the Central Government, is as under :

	Rs. per Kg.
Rice	5.65
Wheat	4.15
Sugar	13.50*

* retail issue price of levy sugar under PDS.

Communication services in Jharkhand

†*677. SHRI ABHAY KANT PRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of sub-standard level of the essential services like Post, Telegraph and Telecommunication in Jharkhand;

(b) whether there is a need to improve the above services in the State; and

(c) if so, what instructions have been issued for improvement of these services?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) to (c) Basic Postal facilities in terms of daily delivery and collection and of dak and sale of postage stamps are being extended to all parts of the country, including Jharkhand. Other postal facilities are extended through post offices which are opened subject to fulfilment of distance, population and income norms. The average area served by a Post Office in Jharkhand is 24.26 Sq. Kms. which compares well with the all India average of 21.17 Sq. Kms. Efforts are being continuously made to improve the access of the network, subject to compliance of norms and availability of resources, and also to improve the quality of postal services.

The quality of Telegraph Services measured as percentage of telegrams delivered within 12 daylight hours has been 89% and 90.21% during 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 respectively. However, while essential telecom services provided by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited in Jharkhand are satisfactory, there are areas where, due to reasons such as inadequate road infrastructure, erratic power supply and extremists problem, difficulties are being faced in maintaining the telecommunication services.

Improvement of telegraph and telecom is also an ongoing process and continuous efforts are being made to improve it. In the case of telecom services, the following instructions have been issued.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.